R E P O R T R E S U M E S

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THE COGNITIVE ENVIRONMENTS OF URBAN PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN. MANUAL OF INSTRUCTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING AND SCORING MOTHER-TEACHER PICTURE.

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THIS MANUAL DESCRIBES MEASURES USED IN "THE COGNITIVE ENVIRONMENTS OF URBAN PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN" PROJECT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO. THE SAMPLE FOR THE STUDY CONSISTED OF 163 NEGRO MOTHER-CHILD PAIRS SELECTED FROM 3 SOCIOECONOMIC CLASSES BASED ON THE FATHER'S OCCUPATION AND THE PARENTS' EDUCATION. A FOURTH GROUP INCLUDED FATHER-ABSENT FAMILIES. THE MOTHERS WERE INTERVIEWED AT HOME AND THE MOTHERS AND CHILDREN WERE TESTED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO WHEN THE CHILDREN WERE 4 YEARS OLD. FOLLOW-UP DATA WERE OBTAINED WHEN THE CHILDREN WERE 6 AND AGAIN WHEN THEY WERE 7. A PICTURE OF 2 NEGRO WOMEN SEATED AT A DESK WAS SHOWN TO THE MOTHER, AND SHE WAS TOLD IT WAS A PICTURE OF A TEACHER AND A MOTHER IN THE CLASSROOM. THE MOTHER WAS ASKED TO TELL A STORY ABOUT WHY THE MOTHER HAD COME TO THE SCHOOL AND WHAT THE MOTHER AND TEACHER WERE TALKING ABOUT. THE RESULT OF THE MOTHER-TEACHER CONVERSATION WAS ASKED FOR IF NOT VOLUNTEERED IN THE STORY. THE RESPONSES WERE TAPE RECORDED, AND THE TRANSCRIPTS WERE SCORED ACCORDING TO 3 CATEGORIES--(1) INITIATOR OF MEETING, (2) PURPOSE OR CONTENT OF MEETING, AND (3) MOTHER-TEACHER RELATIONSHIP. THIS IS A PART OF THE HOME INTERVIEW DESCRIBED IN PS 000 475 AND IS ONE OF THE SAMPLE SOURCES FOR THE LANGUAGE-STYLE ANALYSIS DESCRIBED IN PS 000 492. (DR)

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THE COGNITIVE ENVIRONMENTS OF URBAN PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN

Robert D. Hess, Principal Investigator

MANUAL OF INSTRUCTIONS

FOR ADMINISTERING AND SCORING

MOTHER-TEACHER PICTURE

The measures described in this manual were developed in the project, Cognitive Environments of Urban Pre-School Children, supported by: Research Grant #R-34 from the Children's Bureau, Social Security Administration, and the Early Education Research Center, National Laboratory in Early Education, Office of Education, both of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; the Division of Research, Project Head Start, U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity; the Ford Foundation Fund for the Advancement of Learning; and grants-in-aid from the Social Science Research Committee of the Division of Social Sciences, University of Chicago.

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THE COGNITIVE ENVIRONMENTS OF URBAN PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN

The research sample for the Cognitive Environment Study was composed of 163 pairs of Negro mothers and their four-year-old children, from three socioeconomic classes, defined by father's occupation and parents' education: upper-middle, professional and executive, with college education; upper-lower, skilled and blue collar, with high school education; lower-lower, semiskilled and unskilled, with no greater than tenth-grade education; a fourth group included father-absent families living on public assistance, otherwise identical to the lower-lower class group.

Subjects were interviewed in the home, and mothers and children were brought to the University of Chicago campus for testing, when the children were four years old. Follow-up data were obtained from both mother and child when the child was six years of age, and again at seven years.

Principal Investigator for the project is Professor Robert D. Hess, formerly Director, Urban Child Center, University of Chicago, now Lee Jacks Professor of Child Education, School of Education, Stanford University.

Co-Investigator for the follow-up study is Dr. Virginia C. Shipman, Research Associate (Associate Professor) and Lecturer, Committee on Human Development, and Director, Project Head Start Evaluation and Research Center, University of Chicago, who served as Project Director for the pre-school phase of the research.

Dr. Jere Edward Brophy, Research Associate (Assistant Professor), Committee on Human Development, University of Chicago, was Project Director for the follow-up study and participated as a member of the research staff of the pre-school study.

Dr. Roberta Meyer Bear, Research Associate (Assistant Professor), Committee on Human Development, University of Chicago, participated as a member of the research staff during the pre-school and follow-up phases of the project and was in charge of the manuscript preparation during the write-up phase of the research.

Other staff members who contributed greatly to the project include Dr. Ellis Olim, (University of Massachusetts, Amherst) who was responsible for the major analysis of maternal language; Dr. David Jackson, (Toronto, Ontario) who was involved in early stages of development of categories for the analysis of mother-child interaction, and participated in the processing and analysis of data; Mrs. Dorothy Runner, who supervised the training and work of the home interviewers, acted as a liason with public agencies, and had primary responsibility for obtaining the sample of subjects; and Mrs. Susan Beal, computer programmer.

COGNITIVE ENVIRONMENT STUDY

MOTHER - TEACHER PICTURE MANUAL

SUMMER 1967

During the home interview, the mother was shown a photo of two Negro women seated at a large teacher's desk in a schoolroom, one behind the desk and one on a chair in front of the desk. (Negro models were used because all subjects in the Cognitive Environment Study were Negro.)

The interviewer instructed the mother:

HERE IS A PICTURE OF A TEACHER AND A MOTHER TOGETHER IN THE SCHOOL CLASSROOM. CAN YOU TELL A STORY ABOUT WHY THE MOTHER CAME TO SCHOOL, AND WHAT THEY ARE TALKING ABOUT HERE IN THE PICTURE?

The interviewer was instructed, should the mother not discuss the outcome of the mother-teacher meeting, to ask:

WHAT WILL HAPPEN AS A RESULT OF THEIR CONVERSATION?

Mothers' responses were tape-recorded and typed transcripts or "protocols" were later prepared for scoring purposes.

The stories were scored for beginning (who initiated the meeting), middle (content of the mother-teacher conversation), and end. The last area was expanded to encompass the relationship between the two women, the affective tone of the meeting; this aspect of the stories generally implied or included notions about the outcome, whether agreement would be reached or the problem solved.

Each respondent received a score for each of the three areas of her story.

PS000481

A. INITIATOR of the meeting

1. The school(specifically for this meeting): mother has been called in by teacher, principal, or "the school"

2. Mother (specifically for this meeting): mother has "come to see" the teacher or otherwise arranged the meeting

3. This is a regularly scheduled meeting; a pre-school or registration conference; a monthly or biannual parent-teacher conference; or a friendly visit

4. No information or unclear as to initiator. "Don't know" if specifically asked by interviewer

B. PURPOSE OR CONTENT of the conference or meeting

B_1. Respondent explicitly mentions a problem to be solved:

1. Academic: the child's grades, or 'work', mother has asked for ideas on how to help out at home, or teacher is asking mother to do so.

2. Behavior: the child has misbehaved, is cutting up in class or not paying attention, has gotten into a fight or other trouble socially, or has "psychological" problems of attitudes or personality traits; includes vague references of the form, "something the child did."

3. Both are specifically referred to.

4. A problem is suggested to exist, but mother is vague or not clear as to its nature, says "Don't know" when asked; includes mention of "something the teacher did to the child."

B_2. Respondent offers no explicit mention of a problem:

5. Friendly or regular visit, no problem; unclear as to purpose of meeting, says "Don't know" when asked whether a problem exists.

C. MOTHER - TEACHER RELATIONSHIP

1. The interaction is explicitly described as good; either or both mother and teacher are described as friendly, open, interested, etc. The relationship is one of cooperation between equals, with both working together and neither dominating the interview. The occasion is not so much a problem-solving conference as it is an opportunity to share information and insight into the child's behavior and/or to establish or maintain a good parent-teacher relationship.

2. The interaction may not be described in affective terms, or affect may be neutral (i.e., not clearly positive or negative), but there is clearly no friction. The relationship is one of working together toward a common end, with neither party dominating. Mother is contributing to the discussion. The occasion is problem-oriented, although the content of the problem may be very general or vague. Reference is made to reaching agreement or a solution.

3. The interaction may not be described in affective terms, or affect may be described as neutral, but there is clearly no friction. The teacher dominates the relationship in the sense that she is expected to have or to create information or advice sought by the mother; the mother may express passivity, readiness to do whatever the teacher suggests. The occasion clearly involves some problem with the child, or at least some feeling on the mother's part that there are things she should be doing to help her child and which the teacher can tell her about; mother is seeking a solution or an explanation.

4. The interaction is described as involving negative affect on the part of either or both mother and teacher. The friction between them, however, will be relieved by reaching a compromise or by one party giving in to the other's ideas. The occasion is a problem-solving conference, and a solution will be reached despite initial disagreements or poor relationship between mother and teacher.

5. The interaction is described as involving negative affect on the part of either or both mother and teacher. The friction between them will probably not be relieved, or at least no information is given to indicate a successful outcome to the problem-solving occasion.

6. No information is given as to affect or manner of interaction, or the description of the mother-teacher relationship is too vague to be scored in any of the categories outlined above.

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